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Jones County

(During the winter 1858-1859, Jesse Clement, a co-founder with Dr. George G. Lyon of the daily and weekly *Dubuque Times*, made a series of trips over northeastern Iowa within a radius of 200 miles of Dubuque. These trips were made primarily by stagecoach, by Mississippi steamboat, and to a lesser degree by the newly constructed railroads, of which there were only 600 miles of track in Iowa by 1860. Printed in both the weekly and daily *Times*, Clement provided a detailed firsthand account of scores of Iowa communities. A keen observer, an accurate recorder, and imbued with a good sense of humor, Clement has left a fine record of Jones, Linn, Benton, and Black Hawk Counties in 1858-1859. The more obvious typographical errors have been corrected; the full names (including initials) of individuals have been supplied whenever possible. The inconsistencies of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling have been left unchanged. THE EDITOR)

Anamosa

December 10, 1858

Left Dubuque this morning on a trip into the interior of the State. Our course leads through a section untraversed by us before, and we propose to take notes and print them. In other words, we shall keep a sort of 'journal,' which has been defined "a dialogue between the writer and his memory." In our case, however, the dialogue will be mostly with the reader—should we be favored with one.

Passed today, for the first time, over the Dubuque Western Railroad, which is now open from Farley Station, on the Dubuque and Pacific road,

to Sand Spring, twenty miles northeast of Anamosa. The road is graded most of the way to this point. Ten thousand dollars more, it is estimated, would finish it ready for the rails. When open to Anamosa, this road will be a great feeder of the Dubuque market. The grain, pork, &c. of Jones county will then seek our city for consumption or trans-shipment. But few, comparatively, of the four thousand swine and three thousand beef cattle now slaughtered in this county, see Dubuque; yet most of them would go there were the iron horse on the Western road daily prancing into this young city. That road *must* be hurried up, or the trade of Jones county will be lost to Dubuque. To say nothing of the Air Line Railroad, which may or may not one day open direct communication between this point and Lyons on the Titan 'father' of ship-canals in the West—the Muscatine and Tipton road already open to Moscow on the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad, is working its way northward through Cedar county, which borders Jones on the South. The friends of the Dubuque Western road, then, must bestir themselves or its crowning blessings to the "Key City," will vanish in thin air. The citizens of Anamosa showed their sense of the importance of this road and their confidence in its Directors, last September, by voting to tax themselves ten thousand dollars to aid in its construction.

At Sand Spring village and post office, three

miles south of the present terminus of the Western Road, a good beginning has been made. The place is but one year old, yet contains a hundred inhabitants or more. A village of goodly size is destined soon to spring up there. It is in Delaware county. The other points on the way to this place are Monticello and Langworthy. The former place reminded us of the *fact* that

"God made the country and Man made the town."

Monticello is charmingly located on the South fork of Maquoketa; and its site and the scenery around it, are delightful. With a little taste on the part of the denizens of the place, and an uncompromising and abiding hatred of whisky, it may become one of the loveliest villages in the interior of the State. It is in Jones county.

Langworthy—an appropriate name for a station on the Dubuque Western road, and destined to perpetuate the name and memory of the noble and enterprising President [Lucius Langworthy] of that road—has hardly made a beginning toward a village. Its site is on low ground, though not so low, perhaps, as to make the place unhealthy. It has a post office, hotel and one or two stores.

The other towns, or incipient indications of villages, in the northern half of Jones county, are Bowen's Prairie, Duane, Grove Creek, and Scotch Grove. Bowen's Prairie is less than a year old, we believe, yet contains something like two hun-

dred inhabitants. It has grown up like Jonah's gourd. Its inhabitants are New England people, and are as full of energy and all the elements of thrift, as their native hills are full of rocks.

Omitting Anamosa in this enumeration, the other villages and fore-shadowings of villages in this county are Johnson, Edinburgh, Isbell, Madison, Highland Grove, Fairview, Rome and Wyoming. The last mentioned village is in the eastern part of the county, and is next in size to Anamosa. It contains four or five hundred inhabitants, represented to be enterprising and intelligent.

Jones county has 368,640 acres, and 362,436 of them are assessed. The assessed value of the county, aside from town lots, is upwards of two million dollars! The assessed value per acre is \$5.77. Unimproved lands can be bought from five to eight dollars per acre and farms, excepting in certain favorable localities, from eight to sixteen dollars. The *average* price of land is estimated at \$10 per acre.

Jones county is well timbered and well watered. The south fork of the Maquoketa river and its little affluents water the northern part, the Wapsipinicon crosses the southwest part; and Buffalo Creek empties into the 'Wapsy' at this point. In the county are five flouring mills, and about thirty saw mills, and yet but a small part of its hydraulic privileges are appropriated to the purposes of civilization.

The land in the county is highly fertile, and the few thousand acres of the least promising—the bottom or overflowed lands—have lately been found to be well adapted for the cultivation of the Chinese sugar cane. In some places, the past season, where the seed of this plant lay under water for ten days, it sprang up and did finely. Dr. J. S. Dimmitt, the intelligent Secretary of the Jones County Agricultural Society, informs us that sixteen thousand gallons of Sorghum have been produced in the county this year. Its average price will exceed fifty cents per gallon. On the main traveled roads every third or fourth farmer has a cane mill.

The Jones County Agricultural Society has finally located its show grounds here at the county seat, and they have been gradually improved until they are probably second to none in northern Iowa. The officers of the Society are, Roswell Crane, President; William B. Blodget, James M. Peet and J. N. Atkinson, Vice-Presidents; W. R. Locke, Recording Secretary; J. S. Dimmitt, Corresponding Secretary, and Israel Fisher, Treasurer. These are enterprising men, and are doing much to advance the interests of Agriculture in the county.

Anamosa

December 11

A day spent in Anamosa has caused us to fall in love with the place, and we have concluded to pass the Sabbath here. The Fisher House, kept

by Peaselee & Brother, formerly of Dubuque, is the best hotel which we have found in the interior of the State. It is better than the Montour House, at Independence, and that is saying a good deal. Nobody will ever stop with "His Honor," of the Fisher House, and go empty or ugly (toward the landlord) away. Mayor Amos H. Peaselee is as popular with the citizens of Anamosa as with the traveling community; and though a Democrat, we do not wonder that the "People" irrespective of party prejudices, "vote him in." Under his administration, in spite of the financial pressure, the city is progressing. Between two and three thousand dollars have been expended the past year, in grading the principal street, building side walks, and other improvements. Fifty buildings have been erected since last spring. Some of them are elegant private residences, built of brick and in the most modern style. The population of the city is upwards of one thousand. The "Wapsy" runs on its south side, and is spanned by a substantial bridge between two and three hundred feet in length. Near it is a new and excellent flouring mill owned by Metcalf, David Graham & Co. It has three run of stones. They are of the "Burr" order, and one of them burst into a thousand pieces last night, while under full motion, sending the fragments in all directions, some of them passing through the building into the river; others, weighing from fifty to one hundred pounds being

thrown across the mill and leaving their mark in the form of a deep indentation. One fragment grazed a miller's limb and came within two or three inches of amputating it in a hurry!

Half a mile north of the city is the stone flouring mill of J. H. Fisher & Son, another durable and just now highly industrious establishment. It has also three run of stone. There are three saw mills in the town; twelve or fourteen stores and shops of various kinds; two hotels aside from the Fisher House; three churches; good public schools and a select school for young ladies, recently opened by the Misses Isbell, and highly praised by the first families in the place; and two weekly newspapers, the *Eureka* (Republican) and *Gazette* (Democratic). We have formed the acquaintance of Messrs. C. L. D. Crockwell & Matthew Parrott of the former paper, and Messrs. Mann & Sawyer of the latter. These journalists are, happily, parsimonious of personalities; pay proper attention to County matters, and their papers are read at home and abroad.

The bluffs in the neighborhood of Anamosa furnish excellent limestone of a light color, and almost as beautiful as marble. Some of it is used here and some abroad. People in adjoining towns and counties send for it to use for window sills, caps, &c. It is susceptible of an exceedingly fine polish.

The County seat was removed hither from

Edinburgh two years ago. The Court House is a plain frame building. A jail is in but little demand, and has not been built. Gentlemen who need close quarters are posted to Marion, in Linn county, a distance of only eighteen miles.

The Congregationalists, and United Brethren have church edifices in Anamosa, and the Methodists use the Court House. The Baptists and one or two other denominations, have organizations, but no house of worship. Some of them will probably build next year, as there is much enterprise, in every praiseworthy direction, among the people.

The city officers of Anamosa are, Amos H. Peaslee, Mayor; A. P. Carter, J. J. Welsh, W. R. Locke and E. T. Mellett, Councilmen; E. Cutler, Recorder; W. H. Marsh, Surveyor, and T. A. Griffith, Marshal.

With its excellent water power and other facilities for improvement, we do not see why Anamosa may not soon have her paper mills, her woolen factories, her machine shops, and other manufactories, and rise, one day, to a first class interior city.

Sunday Evening, December 12

Have spent our first Sabbath in Jones county. Went to hear Rev. Samuel A. Benton, of the Congregational Church, the only clergyman whose acquaintance we have made. We like him as a man and a preacher. He is doing much for the mental culture as well as moral instruction of

the community. He is one of the leading spirits in the newly formed literary society; is deeply interested in the public schools of the place, and is trying hard to lay the foundation of a literary institution here which shall eventually rise to the dignity of a college. He knows the value of education, and is doing his part in its dissemination.

The preaching of Mr. Benton is mostly extemporaneous. With Sydney Smith, it is evident that he does not believe in "stale indignation and fervor a week old," dished out from the pulpit. He speaks with earnestness, as though he felt what he said. His discourses evince a wide range of reading, as well as taste and discernment. His illustrations are apposite; his imagery is choice; and his periods are well formed. As might be expected, he draws around him many of the most cultivated families of the city. In short, he has an appreciating, an attentive and a large audience. In it is considerable musical talent. The singing was better than one ordinarily hears in the young towns of the West.

En passant, what power there *is* in music to call buried memories from their grave!—The songs of Zion which we have heard today have caused us to live over again *years* of the long-sepulchred past. Sixteen years ago this 12th of December, we crossed the Merrimac river to seek a home near the source of the Niagara, at the foot of Lake Erie; and few are the days which we have spent

bodily in New England since the closing month of the year 1842; but in spirit we have been there on this sacred day, and many a vernal spot in the fields of childhood has loomed up before the mind's eye. Melodies of more than mortal sweetness have come "booming over the ocean of Memory," and loved ones from the green isles of the departed, who went thither long ago, have seemed to be near us.

What a wonderful faculty the memory is! If, as Locke says with matchless beauty of rhetoric, "our minds represent to us those tombs to which we are approaching; where, though the brass and marble remain, yet the inscriptions are effaced by time, and the imagery moulders away;" some 'inscriptions' retain their original clearness to the end.—But few people *entirely* outlive the recollections of their childhood. Happy is he whose early days were so full of innocence that he has no desire to forget them.

Since the muscular sense of the memory inclines to weakness with age, the utmost care should be taken to cultivate it. This art of cultivation has been condensed by a writer into four rules—"1. The habit of fixing the mind, like the eye, upon one object. 2. The application of the powers of reflection. 3. The watchfulness of understanding which is known, is a good sense as curiosity. 4. Method."

Some people have no occasion to resort to any

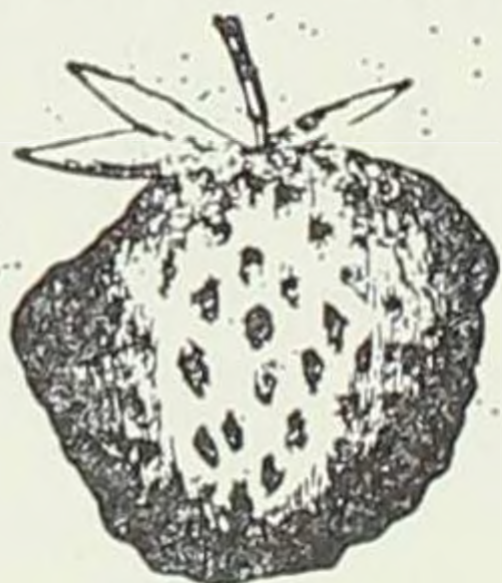
of these arts to strengthen their memory. It has instantaneously a most wonderful grasp. Abercrombie and other writers on mental philosophy, give remarkable instances of memory. Leibnitz, in very advanced age, could repeat *verbatim* nearly all the poetry of Virgil. Saunderson knew by heart the Odes of Horace, the orations of Cicero, and large portions of other classic authors. Gassander could recite from memory every line of the poetry of Lucretius, and Michael Angelo most of that of Dante and Petrarch. We believe it is Walter Scott who states that Dr. Leyden could repeat an act of Parliament or any dry document, equally as lengthy, after once reading it. Wallis, the mathematician, not only extracted the square root of twenty-seven places of figures in the dark, but kept the unwritten result in his memory for a month! Some of the most marvelous feats of this faculty of which we have read, we cannot recall with sufficient accuracy of detail to repeat them—owing of course to the fallibility of our own memory.

But we are thankful that this faculty has not wholly forsaken us. It has taken us back to the home of childhood today. We have trodden its hallowed ground; have heard the blackbird and bobolink carol as they flew over the meadow in which we once hunted for birds' nests; have heard the whippoorwill in the deepening twilight, have shaken hands, in imagination, with the companions

of youth; and have involuntarily looked upward to catch, if possible, some glimpse of the dear ones who have broken from our grasp and ascended to Heaven.

Thanks to Providence for this sweet Sabbath. Though we have spent it, in fact, among strangers, we have been, in fancy, among friends—old, unforgotten friends—whose faces are before us distinct in their outlines, as the face of the clock in the counting room of the Peaslees—which clock reminds us that the hour for retiring has come.

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